

Dear Members of the Connecticut General Assembly Human Services Committee:

My name is Barbara Fernandez Ahumada, I am from Hamden.

I am in favor of S.B. 284: AN ACT INCREASING THE AGE FROM EIGHT TO EIGHTEEN FOR AN INCOME ELIGIBLE PERSON TO OBTAIN HEALTH CARE REGARDLESS OF IMMIGRATION STATUS. Expanding access to HUSKY to age 18, regardless of immigration status, is an important step in ensuring that our immigrant community has access to the health care we need. But our work doesn't end with expanding access to age 18; we need to open access to HUSKY and health care to all immigrants of any age, including parents and adults.

I am a domestic worker and because of the pandemic my work was reduced since many homeowners did not want to expose themselves to the Coronavirus. This affected the economy of my own home and in my family as I am the only one responsible for my three children, being a single mother. My two younger children were born in the U.S., but my oldest child is not a citizen, and today I see the differences with which my three children are treated within the health system.

In February 2020, I began to have health problems of the gastrointestinal system, until December, I could not access the health system, and then the pandemic happened. My concern was for my children, because if I was not well my children would not be well. I even started to sell things from home, and thanks to the help of a local organization I could access the necessary tests and treatment.

The worst of all is that when one of my children gets sick, for my two children who are citizens, I make medical appointments, but when my other daughter gets sick, I have to wait up to three months for an appointment. My three children have and use glasses, for the two little ones, the appointment was immediate, and the glasses cost me absolutely nothing, since the insurance covered all the expenses. On the other hand my other daughter was not so lucky, I had to make a private appointment, pay for it, pay for the glasses and wait for the time to get the money for all this. It is unfair to see the discrimination that the state generates among my children. They both resent and get sad because of these differences, many times I had to hug my daughter to console her.

Illnesses do not wait, but much medical care is limited, and not to mention the treatment. In the end the bills are huge, so I ask you, as mothers and fathers, it is in your hands to make it so children do not suffer, so that children are not discriminated by the health system. At the end of the day, us mothers we can put up with not having insurance, but our children must be provided it. Today you can give many children and adolescents something more like equity, so that in the future they are not discriminated against and are better citizens.

I support S.B. 284 and ask the committee to support and pass this legislation. Going forward, I ask the committee to work to open access to all immigrants, regardless of age.

Thank you for your time,

Barbara Fernandez Ahumada